



Resources and Answers to Frequently Asked Questions

News Release

"Archdiocese submits sexual misconduct files to Nebraska attorney general"

Nov. 30, 2018

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Context

- This past summer, following the Pennsylvania grand jury report on decades of clergy sexual abuse of minors in six of that state's eight dioceses, Nebraska Attorney General Doug Peterson requested investigative files on church personnel accused of criminal sexual misconduct in Nebraska's three Catholic dioceses since 1978.
- The Archdiocese of Omaha immediately pledged its full cooperation and began a review of its files

- The archdiocese recently submitted to the Nebraska attorney general documents pertaining to clergy accused of criminal sexual misconduct.
- The documents included information on 24 archdiocesan priests with substantiated allegations of sexual abuse of minors or misconduct with minors. In all, documentation on 38 clergy were given to the attorney general for alleged abuse as far back as 1956 but reported to the archdiocese between 1978-2018.
- The complete list of clergy is available on this website. The report will be updated if the archdiocese receives future substantiated allegations or after the archdiocese conducts a forensic audit of all its historic clergy files.

Data

Of the 38 clergy with substantiated allegations of sexual abuse of minors or misconduct with minors since 1978:

- 34 offended before 2002 and the establishment of the Charter for the Protection of Children and Young People;
- 24 were archdiocesan priests;
- 10 were either priests from another state/country/religious order ministering in the archdiocese;
- four were deacons
- **There is no one currently serving in ministry – 132 active priests and 215 active deacons in the Archdiocese of Omaha – who has had one credible allegation of sexual abuse against a young person.**

Next steps

- In listening sessions this with rural and urban parishioners, as well as in numerous individual conversations, Archbishop Lucas has heard very clearly an insistence that clergy are held to a high standard of conduct as they perform their pastoral and sacred responsibilities.
- Parishioners have also called for a greater transparency in the resolution of cases of misconduct involving a member of the clergy. The higher standards of conduct and greater transparency are seen as essential in restoring the trust that has been compromised by the misconduct of a few, as well as to do all that is reasonably possible to protect vulnerable youth and adults from harm.
- In recent years, we have followed standards in this archdiocese which we felt reflected best practices to determine whether a priest could continue in ministry, after having committed an act or acts of misconduct. It has been important to assure our people that there are no priests serving in ministry who have been found to have abused a minor or to have been guilty of a crime against minors.
- Now across our culture, people are insisting that it is not enough to say that no criminal charges have been filed against a priest, when a violation of his pastoral responsibility or the moral law have clearly taken place, when judging his fitness for ministry. We agree that we must be more careful and more clear. We have committed to look at the placement of all of our priests, to ensure that we are meeting the rightful expectations of the church and of society.

Therefore,

- In the assignment of priests in the Archdiocese of Omaha, we will continue to consistently follow the provisions of the **Charter for the Protection of Children and Young People** and of civil and canon law.
- Clergy will be held to a higher standard of ministerial and personal conduct, as well as greater transparency, in the assignment of clergy and the reporting of clergy misconduct.
- In collaboration with the **Archdiocesan Review Board**, there has been a review of present clergy assignments, to ensure that priests and deacons are appropriately placed for the good of our people.
- The Vicar for Clergy will collaborate with the Priest Council and Archdiocesan Review Board to update a clear code of conduct for clergy.
- There will be a thorough review and update, if necessary, of our child protection training program.
- Continued zero-tolerance for anyone believed to have been credibly accused of mistreating a

child or vulnerable adult.

- Those who would have a reason to bring forward information about abuse will always be encouraged to contact law enforcement and Mary Beth Hanus, our victim assistance coordinator. Anyone who would call her with a concern would find that they would be very well served, and would be heard.
- We welcome any suggested improvements that would be helpful in making our safe environment program more effective.
- Lastly, Archbishop Lucas promises to make a report to the people of the archdiocese as these improvements are put in place, and he invites your prayers for this effort.

Safe Environment & Victim Assistance information

- Archdiocesan Safe Environment policies and training
- Assistance for victims of abuse

Questions?

CONTACT THE ARCHDIOCESE OF OMAHA



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